

Remarks

Applicants respond to the Office Action mailed December 20, 2005. Applicants' response also contains a request for an extension of time together with the appropriate fee.

The Office Action mailed December 20, 2005 objected to the drawings because they included a few reference characters not mentioned in the description, and also because they did not include a few reference characters that were mentioned in the description.

Applicants have amended the drawings by adding the reference numeral 242 to Figure 7, so that the drawing is consistent with the description in paragraph [0047]. Applicants have removed the reference numeral 125 from Figure 11, and the reference numeral 446 from Figure 14C, and the reference numeral 958B from Figure 20. Applicants added the reference numeral 1148 to Figure 22, consistent with the description at paragraph [0074]. The two added reference numerals do not constitute new matter, as the references are clear from the descriptive text.

Applicants amended paragraph [0038] to refer to keyed openings 24A-D, rather than keyed openings 24, as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants also amended paragraph [0079] to refer to appropriately shaped key opening 24A-D or 124A-D, rather than appropriately shaped key opening 24 or 124, as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants have amended paragraph [0071] to add a reference to the non-marking coating 841 already shown in Figure 18.

The Office Action objected to the disclosure because of spelling informalities. Applicants have amended paragraph [0004] to correct the spelling of "from."

The Office Action also contains an objection to a spelling informality "lat ral" at page 21, line 1. Applicants' file copy contains no such

spelling informality, although the word “lateral” does appear at page 21, line 1. Applicants speculate whether a scanning error might have occurred in entering the application into the Image File Wrapper. Nevertheless, applicants have indicated a correction to paragraph [0065].

The Office Action objected to claim 6 because of a spelling informality “solid in feed.” Applicants have corrected claim 6 to read “solid ink feed.”

The Office Action rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), citing a combination of U.S. Patent 5,861,903 to Crawford in view of published patent application U.S. 2003/0202077 A1 to Jones, and U.S. Patent 6,339,484 B1 to Arai. The Office Action noted that Arai teaches a friction reducing material that is a non-marking material used in a guiding system.

Applicants respectfully submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art familiar with the solid ink feed systems of Crawford and Jones would not look to the teachings of Arai for inspiration or instruction in constructing a feed system for solid ink. The Arai system is directed to providing a guide plate to guide and transport a light sensitive recording medium having an image forming surface, without introducing flaws into that image forming surface. See column 2, lines 48-53 and column 3, lines 30-33, and column 9, lines 48-56. Persons familiar with the solid ink feed systems of the prior art would be aware that the concern in the feeding of solid ink along a feed channel is the accumulation of solid ink material in the feed channel, and movement-blocking adhesion between the ink stick and the feed channel. Those skilled in the art of solid ink feed systems would not see preventing small marks and imperfections on the surface of the ink stick as an issue, and thus would not look to disclosure such as that of Arai for a solution to the issues in solid ink feed. Because those skilled in the art of solid ink feed systems would not look to Area for a solution, applicants submit that it would not be obvious to those

of skill in the art to combine the teaching of Arai with the teachings of Crawford and Jones as suggested in the Office Action.

The Office Action also rejected claims 10-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), citing U.S. Patent 5,861,903 to Crawford in view of published patent application U.S. 2003/0202077 A1 to Jones and U.S. Patent 6,339,484 B1 to Arai. Applicants respectfully submit that the problem addressed in the Arai reference (avoiding flaws in the image forming surface of a light sensitive recording medium) is different from the issues faced by persons designing a solid ink feed system for phase change ink jet printer, and that thus persons of ordinary skill in the art working on a solid ink feed system would not look to the Arai reference for inspiration or suggestions concerning solutions to the challenges of a solid ink feed system. Therefore, applicants submit that the combination suggested in the Office Action would not be obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The Office Action also rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), citing U.S. Patent 5,861,903 to Crawford in view of U.S. Patent 6,339,484 B1 to Arai. Applicants submit that those of ordinary skill in the art addressing a printer with an ink melt plate and an ink feed channel would not look to art such as that included in the Arai reference for solutions to the ink feed channel issues. The issue addressed by the Arai reference (avoiding flaws in the image recording medium being transported over the plate) is different from the issues faced in an ink feed channel. Therefore, the person of ordinary skill in the art would not look to the Arai reference for inspiration or instruction, and thus the combination suggested in the Office Action would not be obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of references suggested by the Office Action would not be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, and that thus the applicants' invention as claimed in claims 1-17

would not be obvious in view of those references. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 1-17.

No additional fee is believed to be required for this amendment. However, the undersigned Xerox Corporation attorney (or agent) hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the issue fee, to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025. This also constitutes a request for any needed extension of time and authorization to charge all fees therefor to Xerox Corporation Deposit Account No. 24-0025.

If the Examiner considers personal contact helpful to dispose of this case, call David J. Arthur, at Telephone Number 585-423-9215, Rochester, New York.

Respectfully submitted,



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DJA/cw
May 22, 2006

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Please substitute sheets 6, 9, 12, 15, and 16.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets